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BREZHNEV**

**A Historic Stage
on the Road
to Communism**

**PRAGUE 1977
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The sixtieth year of the Great October Socialist Revolution will command a special place in the history of the Soviet Union. It is the year of the new Constitution of the USSR, which reflects all that has been achieved by the revolutionary transforming activity of the Party and the people since the victory of October and gives a clear perspective of further communist construction.

The new Fundamental Law of the USSR is a result of the creative endeavour of great masses of the working people. It embodies their experience, knowledge and will, their concern for the prosperity of their socialist Motherland, for the growth of its international prestige.

The great Lenin, defining the basic principles of construction of the socialist state, said that its constitution "embodies what experience has already given, and will be corrected and supplemented as it is being put into effect" (*Coll. Works*, Vol. 28, p. 36). The main thing that life has given our people in the more than forty years that have passed since the adoption of the previous Soviet Constitution is the building of a developed socialist society, the creation of the world's first state of the whole people.

I

A developed socialist society is a natural stage in the socio-economic maturing of the new system in the framework of the first phase of the communist formation. This, to use Lenin's words, is the fully established socialism from which the gradual transition to communism begins. This is precisely the stage in the development of socialism that has been achieved in our country.

When the Marxist-Leninist classics, lifting the curtain of time, charted the contours of socialism and communism they were extremely careful. Not a grain of utopia. No flights of fantasy. Only what could be scientifically proved: the basic trends of development, the main, fundamental characteristics. Theoretically it was clear that the transition from capitalism to communism would embrace a long historical period, that the new society would rise from one stage of maturity to the next. But no one could tell in advance what concretely these stages would be. Engels wrote that the question of the stages of transition to communist society "is the most difficult of any that exist. . ." ¹

Lenin, the Communists of Russia were the first who had to answer that question. It is understandable that Lenin's attention was focused mainly on the immediate tasks of that period, on creating the foundations of the new social system. But genius always anticipates its age. Already at the dawn of Soviet power Lenin spoke of "accomplished", "full"

¹ Letter to Konrad Schmidt. Zürich, July 1, 1891.

and "developed" socialism as the perspective, the goal of the socialist construction that had been launched. It was these ideas of Lenin's that formed the basis of the conception of developed socialist society evolved by the collective efforts of the CPSU and other fraternal parties.

The experience of the USSR, of other countries of the socialist community testifies to the fact that laying the foundations of socialism, that is, abolishing the exploiting classes and establishing public ownership of the means of production in all sectors of the national economy, does not yet make it possible to launch the direct transition to communism. Before this certain stages in the development of socialism on its own basis must be traversed. Moreover, practice has shown that the development, the perfecting of socialism is a task no less complex, no less responsible than the laying of its foundations.

It is self-evident that a mature socialist society must rest on *highly developed productive forces, on a powerful, advanced industry, on a large-scale, highly mechanised agriculture built on collectivist principles*. Such today is the Soviet economy which, both in scale and technical capability, differs fundamentally from what we had four decades ago, when socialist production relations had already prevailed in town and country.

In this period the gross social product increased 18-fold, the power-to-man ratio in industry nearly 8-fold, and in agriculture more than 15-fold. Our economy today is inconceivable without nuclear power, electronics, computers, transistors and many other industries that in 1936 we did not possess. The share of the industries determining technological

progress and economic efficiency in the total volume of industrial output has more than tripled.

In the initial stages of socialist construction Soviet people had to concentrate their resources and efforts on the most urgent tasks, on things that the very existence of our state depended on. Today, in the conditions of developed socialism, on the basis of the constant growth of the whole national economy, the combination of the scientific and technological revolution with the advantages of the socialist organisation of society, it has been possible to achieve a perceptible swing of the economy towards ever fuller satisfaction of the people's many and diverse material and cultural requirements. In other words, the supreme goal of socialist production today is becoming directly central to the Party's practical policy. The historical advantages of socialism as a mode of production and way of life, its genuinely humane essence are thus more fully and dramatically revealed.

The Soviet people's material and spiritual life has risen to a new, incomparably higher level. Their real incomes have increased more than 5-fold in comparison with 1936. The general culture and education of the Soviet person, who, not for nothing, is known as "the world's biggest reader", have substantially increased. Nearly ten million people—over seven times more than 40 years ago—are at present studying in our higher and specialised secondary schools; the transition to universal secondary education has been accomplished in the main. The labour of industrial and agricultural workers, of all Soviet people has become more creative and meaningful. Several generations of working people have already grown up and been nurtured in the spirit

of collectivism and comradely mutual assistance in the conditions of victorious socialism, never having experienced the oppressive, traumatic atmosphere of an exploitative society. The scientific materialist world-view has become firmly established in the social consciousness.

At the stage of developed socialism, as our experience has shown, there is a considerable *rise in the level of socialisation of the economy and a steady drawing together of state (the whole people's) and collective farm-cooperative forms of socialist property*. In recent years this has been actively promoted by the Party's line of deepening specialisation and concentration of agricultural production on the basis of interfarm cooperation and agro-industrial integration, a line developing the ideas of Lenin's cooperative plan in their application to present-day conditions. More than 7,000 interfarm organisations and amalgamations set up by the joint efforts of state enterprises and collective farms are functioning in the country today. This is a new phenomenon in our socio-economic practice.

Profound changes have also taken place in the social structure of Soviet society. The Soviet working class, which is its leading force, today totals more than 70 million people, or two-thirds of the gainfully employed population (whereas in 1936 it was only one-third). The workers' social activity and political maturity, their participation in government are constantly growing. The proportion of workers among deputies of the Soviets at all levels has increased five-fold over the past forty years and now stands at more than 42 per cent. Their general educational and professional training is constantly improving. Today 73.2 per cent of workers

have a higher or secondary (not less than eight years) education, whereas forty years ago the figure was less than eight per cent. A production worker of a new type, harmoniously combining physical and mental work, is growing up in the conditions of developed socialism and under the influence of the scientific and technological revolution.

Our collective farm peasantry has also changed considerably. In social status it is coming steadily closer to the working class and its educational level and way of life now differ little from those of the urban population. A collectivist psychology, a high ideological level and dedication to the cause of socialism and communism are the characteristic features of today's peasant, born and brought up in the collective farm.

Our intelligentsia, replenished mainly by workers and peasants, gives all its creative energy to the building of the new society. This is the fastest growing contingent of the Soviet working people. The past four decades have seen a 34-fold increase in the number of people with a higher or specialised secondary education in industry, and a 47-fold increase in agriculture.

Socialism has developed in Soviet people a sense of being the true masters of their country, it has fostered in them an urge to master the Leninist science and art of managing all social life on socialist principles. The broad masses of the working people have become an unfailing source of the formation of socialist cadres. These are people who organically combine party spirit and thorough knowledge, keen political awareness and a well-developed feeling for the new, an ability to assess their own

activities critically and listen attentively to the voice of the masses.

In the process of building developed socialism the social basis of the socialist system in our country has expanded. The alliance of the working class and the collective farm peasantry has developed in the solid political and ideological unity of these classes with the people's intelligentsia, which has now fully adopted the positions of socialism. The unbreakable alliance of workers, peasants and intellectuals, of all who are engaged in either physical or mental labour, is the prime source and guarantee of further success in communist construction.

The formation of a historically new social and international community—the Soviet people—has become an important symbol of developed socialism in our country, an indicator of the growing homogeneity of Soviet society, the triumph of the nationalities policy of the CPSU. This means that the common features of Soviet people's behaviour, character and world-view which do not depend on social and national distinctions are gradually assuming decisive importance in our country.

Thanks to the convergence of the diverse forms of socialist property, the gradual obliteration of any essential distinctions between town and country, between mental and physical labour, and adoption by all working people of the ideological and political positions of the working class, the interests and goals, the social ideals and psychology of all strata of the population have drawn closer together than ever before. On this basis substantial changes have also occurred in the political system. Essentially they consist *in the growing of the state of the dicta-*

torship of the proletariat into a socialist state of all the people.

Such are the objective processes that led our Party to the conclusion that *developed socialism has now been built in the USSR, that is to say, a degree, a stage in the maturing of the new society has been reached when the repatterning of the totality of social relations on the collectivist principles intrinsically inherent in socialism is completed.* Full scope for the functioning of the laws of socialism, for the manifestation of its advantages in all spheres of social life, the organic integrity and dynamism of the social system, its political stability and indestructible intrinsic unity—such are the major distinguishing features of the developed socialist society. It stands to reason that the principle of distribution according to labour still holds good even at this stage of the development of the new system, and will continue to do so for some time.

We proceed from the fact that cognition and use of all the opportunities offered by developed socialism are, simultaneously, transition to the building of communism. In other words, the dialectics of development are such that as the mature socialist society perfects itself it gradually grows into a communist society. It is impossible to divide these two processes, to draw a line between them.

We are profoundly convinced that *no matter what the specific conditions in the countries building socialism may be, the stage of its perfection on its own basis, the stage of mature, developed socialism is the essential link between social transformations, a relatively long period of development on the road from capitalism to communism.* It stands to reason that this necessity, this regularity will be embodied

in their own way in the conditions of the various socialist countries.

In the USSR the task of building a suitable material and technical basis for developed socialism had to be accomplished after the foundations of the new system had been laid. Evidently this is the common road for all countries that initiate socialist transformations with a weak or medium developed economy. In countries that by the time their socialist revolution is victorious will have highly developed productive forces, the position will, of course, be different in many ways. But even they, undoubtedly, will have to solve such complex problems of building and perfecting mature socialism as, for example, mastering the difficult science of organising all social life on socialist principles, including the science of economic planning and management, the bringing together of all classes and social groups on the basis of the socialist interests and communist ideals of the working class, fostering the socialist consciousness, perfecting and developing socialist statehood and democracy.

II

Socialist democracy is one of the world-historic gains of the Great October. Democracy has revealed itself for the first time in its true meaning, that is, as the power of the people. For the first time real civil and political equality of rights has been won by those who never experienced it under any exploitative system—the working people. For the first time the principles of democracy have been extended to

all spheres of the life of society, including its basis—production relations.

Democracy, which is natural and necessary in the conditions of socialism, is not something that is fixed and static in its forms, functions and manifestations. It develops as society develops as a whole. It is possible, of course, to assess the level of development of socialist democracy only if one has a clear criterion for doing so. Marxists-Leninists have such a criterion. Under socialism, Lenin observed, "for the first time in the history of civilised society, the *mass* of the population will rise to taking an *independent* part, not only in voting and elections, but also in the *everyday administration of the state*" (Vol. 25, pp. 487-488). This was and remains for us the main criterion, the criterion which we take for assessing the successes of our democracy, determining the paths of its further development and improvement.

On the basis of this criterion we can say quite justifiably that our society of developed socialism has also become a society of developed socialist democracy. *At the stage of mature socialism, in the conditions of the state of the whole people the increasingly broad and active participation of the working people in administering the life of the country has firmly established itself as the central trend of the political development of Soviet society.*

The most representative organs of our state power, the *Soviets*, are working more effectively today. The democratic principles of their formation and activity have been further developed. The prestige, the powers of the deputies have grown and their ties with the masses have strengthened.

At the present time we have more than 2.2 million

people's deputies. And if we take into account those previously elected to the Soviets, the country has many millions of people who have been through the great school of government, of political leadership. Twice as many questions are considered and decided in the Soviets today than ten years ago. Most of these questions are studied in advance by standing commissions of which there are at present 330,000. Beside the 1.8 million deputies, 2.6 million other citizens, activists, take part in their work.

The working people's demands on those whom they elect as their representatives have become stricter. It is well known that the voters' right to recall their deputy is an important element in our democracy. In the past ten years about 4,000 deputies who, in one way or another, had not justified the trust of their constituency, were recalled from Soviets at various levels, including the Supreme Soviet. So this democratic right is not merely proclaimed, but carried out in practice and serves as a good means of raising deputies' sense of responsibility for their activities.

The deputies report back more regularly to their constituents. At the suggestion of deputies of the USSR Supreme Soviet a clause has been introduced into the new Constitution specially emphasising the obligation of the Soviets and the organs which they set up to keep the population well informed about their work and the decisions they take. This promotes a more consistent realisation of the principle of publicity—the key principle of the activities of the Soviets, of which Lenin said that they were “an authority open to all, it carried out all its functions before the eyes of the masses, was accessible to the masses, sprang directly from the masses, and was a

direct and immediate instrument of the popular masses, of their will" (Vol. 10, p. 245).

The Soviets, which form the basis of the political system of the USSR, are the major instrument for the exercise of genuine people's power. But socialist democracy also has a good many other, constantly improving forms of participation of the working people in the administration of the state and public affairs. Some of these forms of people's power were not previously formalised in the Constitution. But they arose and developed in life. And it is about them that I should like to speak in somewhat greater detail.

Nationwide discussions have become an established feature of the practice of our democratic life. Not a single state plan for the development of the national economy, not a single major act of legislation—on marriage and the family, on pensions, on questions of protecting nature, for example—has been passed in recent years without nationwide discussion of the draft.

Clearly, the question of the new Constitution, of what kind of Constitution it should be, could be posed only at such a nationwide forum. The Constitutional Commission set up by the USSR Supreme Soviet prepared, with the help of a large number of scientists, legal experts, experienced officials of the state apparatus and public organisations, the draft of the Fundamental Law, which was then discussed by more than 140 million people, more than four-fifths of the adult population. They spoke at meetings of workers, of Party, trade union and Kom-somol organisations, at sessions of the Soviets, on radio and television. They wrote to the newspapers and the Constitutional Commission. The 180,000

letters from working people are living, genuine documents of our democracy.

Those who were in close touch with the life of our country in those days know that this was a time of tremendous upsurge in creative energy, a time of heated discussions, of arguments between people deeply concerned with the subject. Soviet people put forward nearly 400,000 proposals on specific amendments to the draft of the Fundamental Law. Many of them had to do with key questions of our life—the role of labour under socialism, the definition of the social basis of the Soviet state, the taking into consideration of voters' mandates in the work of the Soviets, the citizens' duties to protect socialist property, the right to practise small, subsidiary farming, etc.

The Constitutional Commission had to work hard to analyse and classify the proposals submitted before presenting its recommendation for endorsement by the Supreme Soviet, which, taking into account all opinions expressed in the course of these nationwide discussions, introduced amendments to 118 (of the 173) articles and added one new article.

So, when we say that the actual maker of the Constitution is the whole Soviet people, it is not an exaggeration, not just a fine-sounding phrase. It is a fact. And it shows that in our country we do not have alienation of the working people from political power, that the masses' distrust of everything to do with the state, that eternal feature of exploitative society, has been completely overcome.

During the discussion of the draft Constitution Soviet people showed in full measure their exacting, proprietary attitude to all matters concerning socie-

ty. Many sharply critical remarks were addressed to various institutions, enterprises, organisations and their administration. We pay all due attention to the criticisms voiced by the public and seek to remove the shortcomings that they reveal. In freedom of criticism our Party sees an effective instrument for the development of democratic society, an indispensable condition for the normal functioning of all its institutions.

Participation in nationwide discussions helps Soviet people to become more clearly aware of the close connection between their daily affairs and the wide horizon of social development. This connection between the working people's interests and aspirations and the key objectives of communist construction also manifests itself vividly in the socio-political activity of the *production teams*.

Questions concerning the role of the production team in our society figured prominently in the discussion on the draft Constitution. This is understandable. After all, it is in this primary unit of our social organism that the initiatives affecting the life of the whole country are born and developed.

Suffice it to say that the drawing up of the state plan begins from the production team. And it is natural that its fulfilment and overfulfilment also depend, to a decisive degree, on the efficiency and initiative of the production teams. Take, for example, the Moscow No. 1 Car-and-Tractor Electrical Equipment Plant. Its production team, when discussing the tenth five-year plan, made more than 200 proposals, most of which were put into effect. The result was that the factory produced additional output worth 2.1 million roubles.

Many questions going beyond narrow production

interests are decided in the production teams. These questions range over the organisation of socialist competition, distribution of the material incentive funds, improving of professional skills, deployment of personnel, and concern for the rest and leisure, for the everyday life of the working people, the satisfaction of their spiritual needs. Raising the quality of medical care, further defining the principles of the use of the growing housing fund, more energetically combating red tape, devoting more attention to the moral upbringing of the young people, these are only a few of the highly significant social problems raised by the production teams in connection with the discussion of the draft Constitution.

In accordance with numerous proposals made by the working people, broad rights in the discussion and deciding of state and public affairs, in administering enterprises and institutions have been formally assigned to the production team in the new Fundamental Law; the very article on the role of the production team has been transferred to the chapter on the political system of the USSR.

The deepening of socialist democracy has become one of the driving forces of the country's economic progress. In its turn, the multiplication of the production resources and national wealth of Soviet society has become an important factor in strengthening and developing its democratic principles.

In the conditions of mature socialism the economic basis of socialist democracy has expanded, the rights of citizens have acquired a more substantial material content, and the guarantees of these rights have become more effective. Anyone who compares the new Fundamental Law of the USSR with the

previous Constitution can be sure that it reflects qualitative changes in the extent of the rights and freedoms of the Soviet person.

The new Fundamental Law, it goes without saying, fully confirms the freedoms written down in the previous Constitution—freedom of speech, the press, assembly, meetings, processions and demonstrations. At the same time other political rights that have long since become common practice in public life have been formalised in the Constitution. Of fundamental importance is the new article proclaiming that the citizen of the USSR has the right to participate in government, in administering public affairs. Compared with the previous Constitution, the new Fundamental Law grants Soviet people more rights in the protection of their personal interests. The safeguards of citizens' political rights have also been strengthened. For example, it is obvious that the right to criticise becomes more meaningful when, as has been done in the Soviet Union, it is backed up by a constitutional clause forbidding any persecution for criticism and the stipulation that anyone guilty of violating this clause shall be punishable by law.

Now about the socio-economic rights concerning the very foundations of people's life. I will cite only a few examples by which the advances in this sphere may be assessed. The right to work has for decades been regarded as a matter of course in our country. Today it incorporates the right to choose a profession, the kind of occupation and activity corresponding to one's vocation, professional qualifications, and so on. We can now give our citizens **this guarantee** because we have created an economy which makes not only a steadily growing, but also a more varied

demand for labour power, for specialists. We can also guarantee this right because we have evolved a highly developed system of general and special education, of professional training and improving skills.

The new Constitution endorses the vitally important right to housing. This was not mentioned in the previous Constitution. Today a reliable material base has been created for this right. Seven times more housing is built annually than in 1936. The right to material security in old age was also written down in the previous Constitution. But today, in comparison with 1936, there are dozens of times more people in advanced age who enjoy this right. And the average state pension has increased almost three-fold.

The fact that socialist democracy proclaims not only political but also socio-economic rights, that it not only proclaims them but guarantees them, constitutes one of the fundamental features distinguishing it from bourgeois democracy. In a society of mature socialism with its highly developed economic potential this distinguishing feature of socialist democracy stands out in bold relief.

Providing wide scope for the political, economic and spiritual activity of citizens, their representatives and organisations, our democracy guides this activity towards goals that the whole people, all of society are interested in attaining. At the same time it must ensure expression of the multiform specific interests of various groups, dovetailing and coordinating them with the interests of society as a whole. A big part in this work is played by *public organisations*.

Thus it is one of the indispensable concerns of

the trade unions to protect the interests of labour. They act resolutely and unhesitatingly when any manager of an enterprise forgets the standards laid down in labour legislation or the social needs of the working people. Last year, nearly 10,000 such administrators were removed from their posts at the demand of trade union committees. But we do not have the conflict between labour and capital, between workers and employers, that is intrinsic in bourgeois society. In such conditions the trade unions give best expression to the interests of the working people by organising their participation in the management of production, in administering all public affairs. A result of this, for example, is the activity of the standing production committees. There are 130,000 of these in the USSR today and 64 per cent of their members are workers. Every year 1.5 million proposals for increasing production efficiency are submitted by these committees. Obviously this brings considerable benefit to the national economy. But at the same time the material possibilities for better satisfaction of the social and everyday needs of the working people themselves are expanded.

Or, let us take the Komsomol—our youth organisation. Young people have an urge for the romantic. And when the Komsomol, for example, attracts hundreds of thousands of young men and women to the construction of the Baikal-Amur railway, it combines the young people's specific interests with a great nationwide interest—the building of a new transport artery in Siberia.

In short, socialist democracy ensures a sensitive response to the growing diversity of social interests and opens up a broad field for the initiative and socio-political activity of the masses.

The development of socialist statehood and socialist democracy is a process in which the key role belongs to the Communist Party. The CPSU has been promoted to the role of leading and guiding force of our society by the victory of the October Revolution, by the whole 60-year history of the Land of Soviets. This role of the Party is clearly reflected in the Fundamental Law of the Soviet state.

In guiding the activities of the Soviets, the CPSU does not take their place; it strictly delimits the functions of Party and state organs and pursues its line primarily through the Communists working in them. The essence of this Leninist principle is clearly expressed in the Fundamental Law, which stresses that all Party organisations function within the framework of the Constitution of the USSR. Like all the Soviet people, Soviet Communists are fully aware that no privileges accrue to the Party from the constitutional formalisation of the leading role of the CPSU in our state and our society. On the contrary, this places additional responsibility on the Party because its guiding role is carried out not by the force of authority but thanks to its high political prestige and ideological influence among the masses.

The efforts that the Party constantly makes to strengthen socialist legality and law and order help to extend the democracy inherent in the nature of our social system.

As we know, one of the standard methods of present-day anti-communist propaganda trying to discredit the Soviet system is to cite the illegal repressions, the violations of the principles of democracy and socialist legality that occurred during the years of the personality cult. Of course, they prefer to ignore the fact that it was the CPSU that

openly and uncompromisingly condemned such practices committed in contravention of the principles of the Constitution, carried out extensive work to establish Leninist standards of Party and state life, and created firm safeguards against the abuse of power and violations of citizens' rights.

The Communists have always regarded the realization of democratic rights and freedoms as an effective weapon of the working people in the struggle for socialism and communism. Knowledge of one's rights, the ability to apply them in the interests of building the new society is a most important feature of the Soviet person's active, life-asserting position, his high level of political culture, the formation and development of which have always been and remain at the focus of our Party's attention. It goes without saying that the citizen's understanding of his responsibility to society, his high patriotic duty to work honestly and conscientiously for the benefit of the people, to be always ready to defend the revolutionary gains of the motherland of October, forms an indispensable element of political culture. The idea that performance of civic duties is just as much a necessary element of democracy as the exercise of rights and freedoms was expressed by very many participants in the discussions of the draft Constitution. And this idea is clearly expressed in the appropriate articles of our Fundamental Law.

We stand firm by the position that the democracy of socialism is incompatible with any barracks-type bureaucratic order or any anarchistic libertarianism in relation to socialist principles, standards and laws. As we know, the banner of the First International, founded by Marx and Engels, bore the words: "No rights without duties, no duties without rights."

Today this slogan of the Working Men's International Association has become one of the important principles of the life and work of Soviet working people.

The rise and development of socialist democracy is a complex process. We are well aware that in this sphere we also have unsolved problems and difficulties. There is much work to be done in bringing all the standards of our legislation into accord with the new Constitution. We believe that considerable reserves lie in improving the work of all departments of the state apparatus, which should take a more responsive attitude to creative initiative, to the needs and anxieties of the working people. We also expect more exactingness, more effectiveness from the agencies of people's control, whose importance and authority have been raised by the Constitution that has come into force.

We are doing everything necessary to perfect Soviet democracy, to develop our statehood in the direction of communist social self-government. The adoption of the new Constitution of the USSR is another big step along the road to this great goal of the Communists of all countries.

III

The establishing and development of the world's first socialist state has always aroused great interest beyond the borders of our country, leaving neither the supporters of socialism nor its class adversaries indifferent. It is quite natural therefore that the major advances in the development of the political

system of Soviet society formalised in the new Constitution of the USSR, and the actual process of its discussion and adoption, have attracted the attention of the whole planet. A number of trends indicating the international significance of this major event in the life of the Soviet people may be singled out.

Above all, our country's new Constitution contributes to the theory and international practice of the construction of socialism, enriching them with the experience gained in organising the first ever socialist state of the whole people.

Revealing the fundamental importance of internationalising revolutionary experience and creatively assimilating everything valuable produced by the struggle of the working people throughout the world, Lenin noted that each attempt, taken by itself, to build a new society might be one-sided and suffer from certain inconsistencies, that "complete socialism" is created "by the revolutionary cooperation of the proletarians of *all* countries" (Vol. 27, p. 346).

It is known that in working out their own constitutions the fraternal countries which embarked upon the road of socialism later than us, took into consideration the achievements of Soviet legislation, which was then the only source of practical experience of socialist state construction. Today, in many of these countries the task of building a developed socialist society is being posed and successfully accomplished. And, as the leaders and the press of these states have noticed, the new Soviet Constitution is a useful document for defining the perspectives of their own development.

In drawing up the new Fundamental Law of the USSR we, in our turn, relied not only on the constitutional experience of Soviet history but also paid

great attention to the practice of other socialist countries. This helped us, in particular, to enrich the content of certain articles of the Constitution concerning citizens' rights and duties and to improve its general structure.

Taken as a whole it is nothing else but an accumulation of collective experience of socialist state construction. And the richer this experience the more clearly the general patterns of formation and development of socialism's political system emerge, the more fully their international importance is revealed. The essence of the matter, of course, is not that certain stereotypes take shape which have only to be copied. The essential point is that scientifically grounded and practically tested guidelines are evolved that in the specific conditions of various countries help them to find the correct solutions to the complex problems of asserting and developing socialist statehood and socialist democracy.

Life has proved that such guidelines can be of use not only directly in the building of socialism, but also on the roads towards it. This is shown, for example, by the character of many of the comments on the new Soviet Constitution in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Prominent figures and the press of these countries note that the experience of socialist construction reflected in our Constitution contains a great deal that is of value to peoples who, after liberating themselves from colonial dependence, are confronted with the choice of a path of further development, with the problems of strengthening their national statehood.

The international importance of the new Constitution of the USSR is determined also by its indispu-

table influence on the course of the contemporary contest between the two world systems.

By the very fact of its existence, its example, socialism has always exerted a positive influence on the internal life of the capitalist countries and helped in the just struggle of the progressive forces. The new Constitution, incorporating all the 60-year experience of our country's development along the path of October, multiplies the magnetic force of the socialist example. It patently reveals the practical paths towards effective and truly democratic solutions of the problems of social development in the interests of the working people.

The truth about socialism, about its democracy, embodied in the Constitution, gives the Communists of the world an effective ideological weapon in the struggle with our common class enemy—imperialism. This is pointed out by the representatives of many Communist and Workers' parties.

It stands to reason that the Constitution of a developed socialist society has proved unpalatable to those who are fighting against socialism, who spare neither effort nor resources to prevent the victory of the new system. In the report at the Session of the USSR Supreme Soviet on October 4, 1977, I spoke of the most characteristic attacks that our bourgeois opponents delivered at the draft Constitution. Since its adoption the picture has not changed in this respect. So I am not going to repeat myself here. Readers can study our position on this question from the text of the report, which examines the arguments of bourgeois propaganda and shows their contrived and hypocritical character.

We know that there are still a good many people in the world who take at face value the inventions

of propaganda that denigrates the Soviet state and socialist democracy. I am confident that their numbers will be reduced as the world learns more about the new Constitution of the USSR and the life of our people. In this connection I should like to express my gratitude to the Communist and Workers' parties of the non-socialist part of the world who, often in the difficult circumstances of rampant anti-Soviet campaigns, do so much to give a true picture of life in the Land of Soviets, to provide an objective analysis of the problems of developed socialist society. The more people learn about the achievements of socialism and the more clearly they visualise the scale and complexity of the problems that it had to solve and has solved, the more convinced supporters there will be of the new social system and the firmer will be the political and ideological positions of world socialism, of all the Marxist-Leninist parties—the leading force in the fight against imperialism, and for peace, democracy and social progress.

Yet another aspect of the international importance of the new Soviet Constitution is that in both spirit and letter it serves the cause of peace, the security of the peoples, the strengthening of the anti-imperialist solidarity of all progressive forces.

All the aims and thoughts of our people revolve around peaceful, creative endeavour. In the USSR and other socialist countries, as distinct from the imperialist states, there are no classes or social groups that have any interest in the arms race, in military preparations. By including in the new Constitution a special chapter formalising the peaceful character of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, our people have once again stressed their determi-

nation to follow the Leninist course of peace, the course of ridding humanity of the horrors of war, of the material hardships and mortal dangers implicit in the arms race. This chapter contains clauses corresponding to the fundamental obligations that the Soviet Union has undertaken as a participant in vital international agreements, including the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference. Indisputably this imparts additional weight to the efforts that are being made in the world for a further normalisation of the international situation, for the development of detente.

The Soviet Union is a component of the world system of socialism. A profound and consistent international solidarity unites our Party, the whole people with the progressive, liberation forces of the world, with the international Communist movement. It is natural therefore that the Constitution should clearly reflect the class character of the Soviet state's foreign policy, its social ideals and political sympathies, its traditional support of the peoples' struggle for national liberation and social progress. It also reflects the positions that have been worked out by the CPSU on a collective basis together with the other Communist parties and have been recorded in their joint documents, for example, at the Berlin Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties of Europe.

In short, our Constitution elevates to the rank of a state law of the USSR that which constitutes the very essence of the foreign policy of the socialist state—its concern for peace, for the creation of international conditions consonant with the struggle for national freedom and social progress, for socialism and communism.

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In making the new Constitution we worked on the assumption that it would become an important means for the further development and deepening of socialist democracy, a powerful instrument for building communism.

The discussion and adoption of the new Fundamental Law of the USSR have evoked a powerful upswing in the labour and socio-political activity of our people directed towards accomplishing the great tasks posed by the 25th Congress of the CPSU, towards the building of communist society. In fulfilling these tasks the Soviet people, rallied closely around their Leninist Communist Party, see not only their great patriotic duty, but also their internationalist duty to the world's working class, to all humankind.

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